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SUBJECT: AZERBAIJAN: WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH AND
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY PROGRAMMING REPORT

REF: A. STATE 198968

[1B.](#) STATE 19118

[¶11.](#) Per reftel requests, throughout March the Embassy concentrated programming on women's empowerment issues. In formal and informal settings, the Ambassador, Emboffs, and American visitors to Azerbaijan noted Women's History Month and International Women's Day, emphasizing that women's participation in all aspects of civic life is essential to progress. Events that focused solely on women's issues are outlined below.

[¶12.](#) The Embassy organized a March 6 discussion with visiting American scholars Dr. Valerie Bunce and Dr. Sharon Wolchik on women and politics. The event was held at the office of the American Alumni Association, a 2,000 member strong organization of Azerbaijani youth who have studied in the U.S. Approximately 40 youth from a range of political affiliations participated; most were young women. Dr. Bunce and Dr. Wolchik outlined trends in women's participation in politics in the region since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and gave examples of American women who have been successful at the highest levels of the political arena. The group was lively and engaged, and we have since received requests for further programming on women's issues.

[¶13.](#) To commemorate International Women's Day on March 8, the Ambassador sent letters of congratulations to First Lady Mehriban Aliyeva and Chairwoman of the State Committee on Family, Women, and Children's Issues Hijran Huseynova. In the letters, the Ambassador echoed the Secretary's comments that while we can celebrate the fact that women have taken their rightful place in society, we must also recognize that there is still much to be done.

[¶14.](#) On March 14, Poloff presented a lecture entitled "Influential American Women of the Past Century" as part of Baku State University's American Studies program. She gave examples of American women who have influenced U.S. politics, culture, and a range of industries. About 30 students attended, and the group was actively engaged during the lecture and follow-on discussion, comparing women's political participation in the U.S. and Azerbaijan. The group requested a lecture on trafficking in persons, which we plan to present in April.

[¶15.](#) On March 29, the Embassy hosted a lunch with female Members of Parliament (MPs) in honor of visiting USOSCE Ambassador Finley. Five female MPs attended, and expressed interest in continuing engagement on women's issues. We will provide a full readout of the discussion septel.

[¶16.](#) In addition to the March events, on April 13 we plan to

honor our nominee for the Secretary of State's Award for
International Women of Courage, human rights activist Novella
Jafarova.

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